

WASHINGTON – Congressman Spencer Bachus (AL-6) today announced his support for bipartisan legislation intended to improve care for patients diagnosed with cancer and other serious illnesses.

The Patient Centered Quality of Life Act (H.R. 6157) was formally introduced in the House on Thursday with Congressman Emanuel Cleaver (MO-5) as the lead Democratic sponsor and Congressman Bachus as the lead Republican sponsor.

The legislation is designed to enhance the awareness and coordination of palliative care, which helps patients with serious illnesses manage ongoing pain and other symptoms after their initial medical treatment. The bill has been endorsed by the American Cancer Society.

“We know that more people are living for longer periods of time after being treated for cancer and other serious illnesses. But there are often gaps in the follow-up care they receive. Through better awareness and coordination of services, we can help people more easily resume daily life after difficult medical treatments. We can also reduce fragmentation that raises costs in our health care system. This is bipartisan legislation and I am pleased that it has received the endorsement of the American Cancer Society,” said Congressman Bachus.

“This legislation launches a national effort to improve the fragmented care that people with cancer and other serious diseases often receive and ensure a seamless experience delivered by doctors and nurses in a team-based approach that treats a patient’s pain and other symptoms along with the disease itself,” said Chris Hansen, president of the American Cancer Society Action Network (ACS CAN). “With access to palliative care, patients’ quality of life is improved from the point of diagnosis and during treatment and follow up care.”

The legislation would enhance the emphasis on palliative care training and education at federal agencies including the Centers for Disease Control, Department of Health and Human Services, and National Institutes of Health and authorize planning for a national summit on palliative care.

Congressman Bachus noted that the University of Alabama at Birmingham currently serves as a national model for palliative care education. It is one of only eleven Centers of Excellence in Pain Education designated by the National Institutes of Health Pain Consortium.